

CHAPTER 684

Weapons and Explosives

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CROSS REFERENCES

Regulation of firearms by counties - see Code of Va. 15.2-1206 et seq., 18.2-287

Toy firearms - see Code of Va. 18.2-284

Discharge of fireworks in park and recreation areas - see S.U. & P.S. 1092.19

Carrying or discharging weapons in parks and community centers - see S.U. & P.S. 1092.20

Explosives and blasting agents - see F.P. 1602.06(F-2600.1 et seq.)

Fireworks - see F.P. 1602.06(F-2701.2 et seq.)

684.001 DEFINITIONS.

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires a different meaning:

- (a) "Sheriff" means the Sheriff of the County or his or her designee.
- (b) "Firearm" means any weapon which will, is designed to or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, provided that stud nailing guns, rivet guns and similar construction equipment, neither designed or intended as weapons, shall not be deemed firearms.
- (c) "Gun" means and includes any rifle, shotgun, pistol or other firearm, and also includes any air gun, air rifle or other similar device designed and intended to expel a projectile through a gun barrel of any length by means of explosive, expansion or release of compressed gas or compressed air.
- (d) "Parcel" means any lot or other contiguous area of land in one ownership or in which all of the owners have joined in a written acknowledgement of the rights of all of them to shoot on all of such land, which constitutes, when combined, an area of not less than twenty acres.
- (e) "Pistol" means a gun having a barrel of less than sixteen inches in length.
- (f) "Recreational shooting" means the discharge of firearms or weapons, except bows and arrows, at fixed or moveable artificial targets.
- (g) "Rifle" means a gun designed, made and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed and made to use the energy of an explosive or compressed gas or compressed air to expel a single projectile through a rifled barrel for each pull of the trigger.

- (h) "Shotgun" means a weapon designed, made and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed and made to use the energy of an explosive in a shotgun shell to fire through a smooth bore one or a number of balls shot for each pull of the trigger.
- (i) "Starting pistol" means any device which is designed or functions to simulate the firing of a weapon by means of a primer or other explosive charge, but which cannot be readily converted for use as a firearm.
(Ord. 85-03. Passed 1-22-85.)

684.01 SHOTGUNS OR RIFLES ON PUBLIC HIGHWAYS AND IN VEHICLES.

(a) No person shall carry or have in his possession a loaded rifle or shotgun while walking or standing on any part of a public street, road or highway within the County, unless he is authorized to hunt on the private property on both sides of such public street, road or highway at such point.

(b) Subsection (a) hereof shall not apply to persons acting at the time in defense of persons or property.
(Ord. Unno. Passed 4-18-77.)

(c) No person shall transport, possess or carry a loaded shotgun or loaded rifle in any vehicle on any public street, road or highway within the County. A shotgun or rifle shall be considered to be loaded when any unfired or live ammunition is contained in the chamber of the weapon or in any other portion of the weapon that is designed to hold extra ammunition and that is attached to or affixed to the weapon.
(Ord. 87-02. Passed 4-20-87.)

(d) Subsection (c) hereof shall not apply to duly authorized law enforcement officers or military personnel in the performance of their lawful duties, or to any person who reasonably believes that a loaded rifle or loaded shotgun is necessary for his personal safety in the course of his employment or business.
(Ord. Unno. Passed 4-18-77.)

684.02 DISCHARGING BB GUNS IN HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS.

(a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to provide against the shooting of air-operated, carbon dioxide gas-operated and spring-operated weapons in heavily populated areas of the County, under authority granted the County in Section 15.2-1209 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended.

(b) Definition. "BB gun," for the purposes of this section, means and includes any air gun, air rifle and similar device designed and intended to expel a projectile through a gun barrel of any length by means of expansion or release of compressed carbon dioxide gas or compressed air or by a combination of spring action and compressed air. The term "BB gun" includes, but is not limited to, devices commonly referred to as paint ball guns, which operate by this means.

(c) Unlawful Acts. No person shall discharge any BB gun in the unincorporated portion of the County, except those areas zoned A-3, A-10 or A-25 under the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance. This section shall not be deemed to prohibit the following acts:

- (1) Any shooting or discharge of BB guns upon a lawfully existing target, trap or skeet range;
 - (2) Any shooting or discharge of BB guns upon a target range operated by any police department or other law enforcement agency;
 - (3) Any discharge of BB guns in an entirely indoor target range, provided that adequate provisions are made to retain within the structure all projectiles discharged; and
 - (4) Any discharge of an unloaded BB gun, or any discharge of a BB gun not resulting in the expulsion of a projectile.
- (Ord. 00-07. Passed 7-8-00.)

684.03 RECKLESS OR CARELESS USE OF GUNS.

No person shall use, employ or discharge any gun in a reckless or careless manner or so as to endanger the life or property of another.

(Ord. 85-03. Passed 1-22-85.)

684.04 TRANSFER OF GUNS TO MINORS PROHIBITED; EXCEPTIONS.

No person shall give, sell, rent, lend or otherwise transfer any gun or starting pistol, or any projectile therefor, to a minor under the age of eighteen years, except where the relationship of parent and child, guardian and ward or adult instructor and pupil exists between such person and the minor.

(Ord. 85-03. Passed 1-22-85.)

684.05 CARRYING AND DISCHARGE OF GUNS BY MINORS.

(a) No minor under the age of eighteen years shall carry any gun or starting pistol on the public highways or public lands of the County, unless such minor is accompanied by an adult where the relationship of adult and minor is that of parent and child, guardian and ward or instructor and pupil.

(b) This section shall not apply to a gun carried unloaded in a completely closed carrying case or when such gun is completely and securely wrapped and not concealed on the person.

(c) No minor under the age of eighteen years shall discharge a gun anywhere in the County, unless in the presence and under the supervision of an adult bearing the relationship defined in subsection (a) hereof.

(Ord. 85-03. Passed 1-22-85.)

684.06 DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS.

- (a) (1) The Board of Supervisors prohibits the discharge of firearms, except for certain hunting activities provided herein, in the following area of the County:

The area within a line following State Route 620 (Braddock Road) from the boundary with Fairfax County west to its intersection with State Route 659, then along State Route 659 north to its terminus at State Route 7, then following State Route 7 west to the corporate limits of the Town of Leesburg, then following the corporate limit line of the Town of Leesburg north and west to the Potomac River, then east along the Potomac River boundary with Maryland to the Fairfax County line, then southwest along the Fairfax County line to its intersection with State Route 620.

- (2) Nothing herein shall prohibit the following hunting activities with firearms, subject to other applicable laws and regulations:
 - A. Deer hunting with handguns, shotguns or muzzle-loading rifles using a single projectile; or
 - B. All other hunting with rifles of .22 caliber rimfire or less, handguns, shotguns and muzzle-loading rifles using single or multiple projectiles.

(b) The discharge of firearms is prohibited within 50 yards of a highway in the primary or secondary system of State roads.

(c) The discharge of firearms is prohibited within 100 yards of any public park or school. Nothing in this section shall be enforced within a national or State park or forest or wildlife management area.

(d) The discharge of firearms is prohibited within 100 yards of a building with a current occupancy permit unless the owner or authorized agent has given permission.

- (e) This section does not apply to the following actions:
 - (1) Any shooting or discharge of firearms upon a lawfully established target, trap or skeet range;
 - (2) The discharge of firearms by any duly authorized peace officer or law enforcement official acting in the proper performance of his or her duties;
 - (3) Any shooting or discharge of firearms upon a target range operated by any police department or other law enforcement agency;
 - (4) Any discharge of firearms in defense of one's life or to kill a dangerous or destructive wild animal;
 - (5) The discharge of blank cartridges in theatrical performances or sporting events or at military funerals or other military affairs; and
 - (6) A managed hunt to control the deer population under the supervision of the Federal, State, or local law enforcement or game management officials.
- (Ord. 01-02. Passed 4-16-01.)

684.99 PENALTY.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: See Section 202.99 for general Code penalty if no specific penalty is provided.)

